



For Immediate Release
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**Hearing Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Regarding the Customs Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Reauthorization Act of 2009**

The Scottish historian John Buchan warned reformers to learn from the past. He counseled: "History gives us a . . . chart."

The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection — or CBP — has a long and rich history. As we reform CBP for the 21st century, we would do well to study the chart that this history gives us.

In 1789, one of the first five laws enacted by the first Congress established a Collector of Customs. This organization ultimately became the U.S. Customs Service, and then CBP. For 220 years, it has collected duties and enforced America's trade laws.

In 2002, CBP got a new job. It still has to fulfill its traditional trade mission. But in addition, CBP must also secure our nation's borders.

These two missions are not mutually exclusive. CBP must do a better job of balancing them. The agency's security mission is vitally important. But I am concerned that CBP has badly neglected its trade mission.

In recent years, CBP simply has not made trade facilitation and enforcement a priority. CBP has devoted fewer people to stopping illegal and counterfeit goods from crossing our borders. It has imposed burdensome paperwork and reporting requirements on American businesses. And it has failed to consult with Congress or businesses before imposing sweeping policy changes.

To address these problems, Senator Grassley and I introduced the Customs Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Reauthorization Act of 2009. Our bill would direct CBP to re-prioritize its trade mission. And our bill would give CBP the tools to do so.

For example, our bill would create new high-level positions within CBP to focus solely on trade facilitation and enforcement. It would establish sophisticated commercial enforcement practices to target those imports that are most likely to violate American laws — including our intellectual property and safety laws.

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Our bill would provide speedy customs clearance for importers with a strong history of complying with U.S. laws. And it would require CBP to do a better job consulting with American businesses affected by its policies, as well as with this Committee and Congress as a whole.

Our bill would provide important benefits for border states like Montana. Montana has not received the personnel or funding that it needs to facilitate the substantial volumes of trade that cross its borders every day.

The bill directs CBP to launch a pilot program to designate certain land border ports as 24-hour commercial ports of entry. I hope that this provision will drive additional trade and other economic resources to the areas that need them most.

And our bill would accomplish all of these objectives without diverting resources from CBP's vital security efforts. As a Senator from Montana, I understand the crucial importance of CBP's national security mission. Montana's border with Canada stretches over 500 miles. I have fought long and hard for adequate resources to secure it.

But CBP needs to balance its security mission with its trade mission. We should look to CBP's own rich history for guidance on how to do so. This history — and this bill — can help CBP to chart a course to better serve the interests of American businesses, the states, and the American people.

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